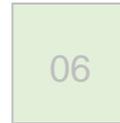


Approved: 20 May 2022
Committee: Policies Review Committee
Signed: J Cottam
To be reviewed: Two years: summer 2024
School Website: Yes



Heron Hill Primary School

EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE POLICY

Introduction

The Early Years Foundation Stage Profile, Department for Children, Schools and Families 2012 states:

“Every child deserves the best possible start in life and support to fulfil their potential. A child’s experience in the early years has a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its own right and it provides the foundation for children to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up.”

Principles

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is based upon four principles:

- A unique child. We recognise that every child is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self- assured.
- Positive relationships. We recognise that children learn to be strong and independent from secure relationships and aim to develop caring, respectful and professional relationships with the children and their families.
- Enabling environments. We recognise that children learn and develop well in enabling environments with teaching and support from adults, who respond to individual interests and needs and help build their learning over time. Our environment is carefully planned and resourced to enable each child to develop the knowledge, skills and concepts they will need to achieve the Early Learning Goals at the end of the Foundation Stage.
- Learning and development. The Early Years Department is set up to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. It is set up in learning areas where children are able to find and locate equipment and resources independently, initiating their own learning. We understand that children learn and develop in different ways and at varying rates.

Purpose

- To make the child’s first experience of school happy, positive and fun.
- To ensure that all children feel valued and secure in the Foundation Stage Setting with positive relationships between each other, parents, carers and staff.
- To ensure the environment, resources and challenges provided reflect a breadth of balance using Early Years outcomes, whilst also encouraging the independence, resilience and confidence needed, ready to meet the demands of the Key Stage 1 National Curriculum.
- To encourage parents to become partners with the school in the education of their children. Parents/carers are valued as their child’s first educators. Staff will work in partnership with families at every opportunity.

- To provide a curriculum firmly based on active learning to meet the needs of the individual child. Within any Early Years Foundation Stage cohort there will be wide variations in terms of development and maturity as well as family, religion, cultural background and special needs. This diversity will be catered for within the **provision** which has a flexible approach, using a wide range of strategies and teaching styles to address particular needs of the children, families and the community.
- To further a love of learning, enquiring minds and the ability to discuss, adapt and negotiate. Child initiated play and purposeful activity with challenge and enjoyment, both inside and outside, will provide opportunity for teaching and learning. Within a well organised environment, children should be able to explore, question, test, observe, experiment, plan, make decisions for themselves and initiate and lead their own learning alongside appropriate adult intervention.
- To provide children with quality time to become engrossed in an activity. Adult intervention at appropriate times will help to deepen, extend and embed their learning.
- To monitor progress throughout the Early Years Foundation Stage, while taking action to identify areas of concern and provide necessary support.
- To help children develop self-control and to respect the feelings, needs, culture and the abilities of others.

Curriculum

There are seven areas of learning and development. All areas are important and inter-connected. Three areas are particularly crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive. These three areas, the *prime* areas, are:

- communication and language;
- physical development; and
- personal, social and emotional development.

There are four *specific* areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied. The specific areas are:

- literacy;
 - mathematics;
 - understanding the world; and
 - expressive arts and design.
- **Communication and language** development involves giving children opportunities to experience a rich language environment with high quality conversations and introduction of new vocabulary in order to develop their confidence and skills in expressing themselves, and to speak and listen in a range of situations.
 - **Physical development** involves providing opportunities for young children to be active and interactive and to develop their co-ordination, control, spatial awareness and movement. Children will develop both their gross and fine motor skills. They must also be helped to understand the importance of physical activity.
 - **Personal, social and emotional development** is crucial for children to lead healthy and happy lives. It involves helping children to develop a positive sense of themselves and others; to form positive relationships and develop respect for others; to develop social skills and learn how to manage their emotions; to set simple goals and to persist and wait for what they want; and to have confidence in their own abilities. Children must also learn how to look after their bodies and manage personal needs independently.
 - **Literacy** involves encouraging children to link sounds and letters and to begin to read and write. **We follow a rigorous Phonics programme 'Supersonic Phonic Friends' to ensure our children develop the skills necessary to become readers.** It is crucial that children develop a life-long love of reading. Children must be given access to a

wide range of reading **and writing materials** (books, poems and **a variety of writing opportunities and resources**) to ignite their interest.

- **Mathematics** involves providing children with opportunities to develop and improve their skills in counting, understanding and using numbers, calculating simple addition and subtraction problems and to describe shapes, spaces, and measures. Developing a strong grounding in Number is essential so all children develop the necessary building blocks to excel mathematically.
- **Understanding the world** involves guiding children to make sense of their physical world and their community through opportunities to explore, observe and learn about people, places, technology and the environment. In addition, listening to a broader selection of stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems will foster their understanding of our diverse world.
- **Expressive arts and design** involve enabling children to explore and play with a wide range of media and materials, as well as providing opportunities and encouragement for sharing their thoughts, ideas and feelings through a variety of activities in art, music, movement, dance, role-play, and design and technology. The quality of what children see, hear and participate in is crucial for developing their understanding, self-expression, vocabulary and ability to communicate through the arts.

Staff must consider **and observe** the individual needs, interests, stage of development of each child in their care and must use this information to **help provide** a challenging and enjoyable experience for each child in all of the areas of learning and development.

Staff working with the youngest children are expected to focus strongly on the three prime areas, which are the basis for successful learning in the other four specific areas. The three prime areas reflect the key skills and capacities all children need to develop and learn effectively, and become ready for school. It is expected that the balance will shift towards a more equal focus on all areas of learning as children grow in confidence and ability within the three prime areas. But throughout the early years, if a child's progress in any prime area gives cause for concern, staff must discuss this with the child's parents and/or carers and agree how to support the child. Staff must consider whether a child may have a special educational need or disability which requires specialist support. They should link with, and help families to access, relevant services from other agencies as appropriate.

English as an Additional Language

For children whose home language is not English, staff will take reasonable steps to provide opportunities for children to develop and use their home language in play and learning, supporting their language development at home. Staff will ensure that children have sufficient opportunities to learn and have an improved standard of the English language during the EYFS, ensuring children are ready to benefit from the opportunities available to them when they begin Year 1. When assessing communication, language and literacy skills, staff must assess children's skills in English. If a child does not have a strong grasp of English language, staff will explore the child's skills in the home language with parents and/or carers, to establish whether there is cause for concern about language delay.

The Role of the Adult

Each area of learning and development should be implemented in the first instance through play. Play is essential for children's development, building their confidence as they learn to explore, to think about problems and relate to others. High quality play is supported by well-organised environments which respond to children's interests, and which widen those interests by introducing children to new materials, experiences and activities. Children learn by leading their own play and by taking part in play alongside interested adults. The children initiate their own activities alongside the adults who observe and interact with the children, recording these interactions as moments of teaching and moving learning on. Staff should respond to each child's emerging needs and interests, guiding their development through warm, positive interaction. As children grow older and

as their development allows, it is expected that there will be some activities, beyond the daily Maths and Phonics sessions, that are led by adults, to help children prepare for Year 1.

In supporting and guiding children's activities, staff must reflect on the different ways that children learn and reflect these in their practice. The three characteristics of effective teaching and learning are:

- **playing and exploring** - children investigate and experience things and 'have a go';
- **active learning** - children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties and enjoy achievements; and
- **creating and thinking critically** - children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas and develop strategies for doing things.

Assessment

We will use:

- Baseline within first 6 weeks in setting
- Termly record of group gap analysis- detailing children on track/ those needing further support.
- Foundation Stage Profile – an assessment process based on the seven areas of learning;
- It summarises progress and learning across the Reception year;
- A Learning Journey sheet with detailed observations of each child's learning, and identified next steps;
- Information from parents (informal and through parents' evenings);
- Dated samples of work indicating development in some skills; and
- Observation of children's wow moments and class activities throughout the year recorded on tapestry.

Assessment, gathered as above, will be used to identify the next step in children's learning and therefore help children make progress towards achieving their potential.

Records Kept In Nursery

- An termly record of children in the three prime areas recording on track/ those needing further support,
- A file will be started for each child by their key worker to include annotated achievements and Learning Journey sheets.
- Learning Journey sheets contain detailed observations of teaching moments and each child's achievements in all areas of learning. It also records identified areas for focus and next steps. These are completed termly, in Nursery. They are published on Tapestry for parents to share.
- Three mark making assessments per year.
- Letters and Sounds phonics phase 1 assessment sheet.

Records Kept in Reception

- Reading Record Book (ongoing record and assessment).
- An ongoing record of children in all seven areas of learning recording those on track/needing further support on the group gap analysis sheet.
- A Learning Journey book will be used for each child to include annotated achievements and Learning Journey sheets.
- Learning Journey sheets contain detailed observations of teaching moments and each child's achievements in all areas of learning. It also records identified areas for focus and next steps. These are completed half termly, in Reception.
- Whole school tracker for phonic phases.

- Three specific writing assessments per year.
- Learn Its tracker

Progress within the EYFS is tracked by individual teachers showing on track/needing further support

- In Reception, termly written reports are given to parents throughout the school year.
- In Nursery, autumn and spring term reviews are sent to parents. They receive a written report in the summer term.
- The 'young three's' children (who enter Nursery in January or April) receive termly reviews until their final summer term before starting school, when they will receive their written report.
- Observations are also shared with parents via Tapestry of their child's ongoing progress and ways they can help at home.

Reception parents also receive EYFS Profile levels for 17 aspects of the curriculum plus a comment on Characteristics of Learning. Profile data is shared with the Year 1 teacher so that she/he can continue to help the children to achieve the Early Learning Goals, if they have not done so before they are expected to access the Key Stage 1 curriculum.

Key Person

Teachers have Key Person responsibility for their class (a safeguarding and welfare requirement). In Nursery the teacher has overall responsibility, supported by a HLTA. However, the Teaching Assistants/HLTA are given key children and have responsibility for observing and assessing the children within their group. The teacher and HLTA are responsible for writing the final summer term report for their key children.

In Reception, classes have their own lunchtime staff and children are in further Key Person groups for activities such as phonics and any interventions.